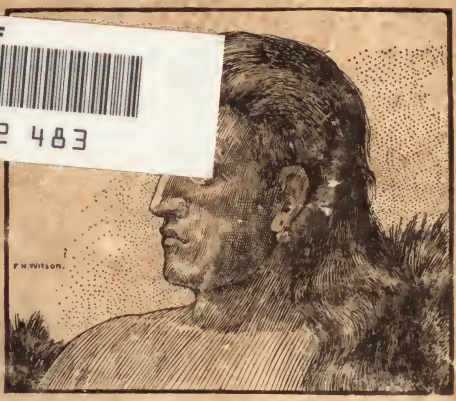


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His Story

TOLD BY HIMSELF

TO

GILBERT L. WILSON

Author of "Myths of the Red Children," "Indian Hero Tales"

ILLUSTRATED BY FREDERICK N. WILSON



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Contents

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|----|
| GLOSSARY OF INDIAN WORDS | . . . | 6 |
| I BIRTH | | 9 |
| II CHILDHOOD | | 19 |
| III THE GODS | | 27 |
| IV INDIAN BELIEFS | | 36 |
| V SCHOOL DAYS | | 43 |
| VI HUNTING BUFFALOES | | 53 |
| VII FARMING | | 61 |
| VIII THE WHITE MAN'S WAY | | 71 |

Glossary of Indian Words

a ha hé

aī (ī)

a pa tít

E dī á ka ta

Hī dǎt sa

Hō Wash té

Īt sī dī shī dī í ta ka

Īt sī ka mǎ hī dī

Ka dū te ta

kū kats

Ma hí dī wī a

Mǎn dǎn

mī há dīts

Mī nǐ tá rǐ

na

Sǎn tēē

Sioux (Sōō). (The plural, spelled also Sioux, is commonly pronounced Soos.)

tē pēē

Tsa ká ka sa kǐ

Tsá wa

ū a kī hě kě

FOREWARD

CATLIN in 1832, and Maximilian in 1833, have made famous the culture of the Mandan and Minitari, or Hidatsa, tribes.

In 1907, I was sent out by the American Museum of Natural History, to begin anthropological studies among the remnants of these peoples, on Fort Berthold Reservation; and I have been among them each summer, ever since.

During these years, Goodbird has been my faithful helper and interpreter. His mother, Mahidiwia, or Buffalo Bird Woman, is a marvelous source of information on old-time life and beliefs.

Indians have a gentle custom of adopting very dear friends by relationship terms; by such adoption, Goodbird is my brother; Mahidiwia is my mother.

The stories which make this little book were told my by Goodbird in August, 1913.

I have but put Goodbird's Indian-English into common idiom. The stories are his own; in them he has bared his heart.

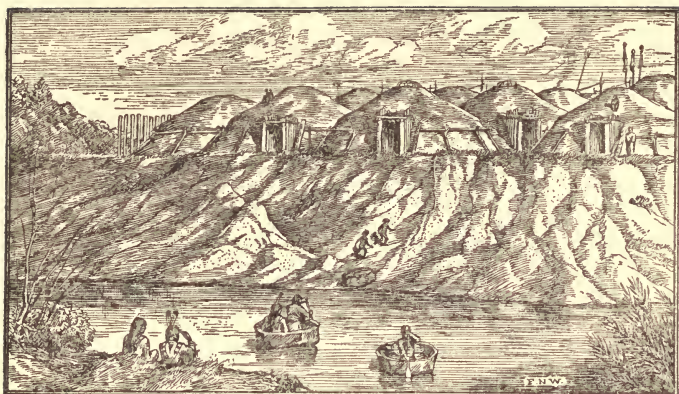
In 1908, and again in 1913, my brother, Frederick N. Wilson, was also sent by the Museum to make drawings of Hidatsa arts. Illustrations in this book are from studies made by him in those years; a few are redrawn from simpler sketches by Goodbird himself.

Acknowledgment is made of the courtesy of the Museum's curator, Dr. Clark Wissler, whose permission makes possible the publishing of this book.

May *Goodbird's Story* give the reader a kindly interest in his people.

Minneapolis.

G. L. W.



An Old Hidatsa Village.

I

BIRTH

I WAS born on a sand bar, near the mouth of the Yellowstone, seven years before the battle in which Long Hair * was killed. My tribe had camped on the bar and were crossing the river in bull boats. As ice chunks were running on the Missouri current, it was probably the second week in November.

The Mandans and my own people, the Hidatsas, were once powerful tribes who dwelt in five villages at the mouth of the Knife River, in what is now North Dakota. Smallpox weakened both peoples; the survivors moved up the Missouri and built a village at

* General George A. Custer.

Like-a-fish-hook Bend, or Fort Berthold as the whites called it, where they dwelt together as one tribe. They fortified their village with a fence of upright logs against their enemies, the Sioux.

We Hidatsas looked upon the Sioux as wild men, because they lived by hunting and dwelt in tents. Our own life we thought civilized. Our lodges were houses of logs, with rounded roofs covered with earth; hence their name, earth lodges. Fields of corn, beans, squashes and sunflowers lay on either side of the village, in the bottom lands along the river; these were cultivated in old times with bone hoes.

With our crops of corn and beans, we had less fear of famine than the wilder tribes; but like them we



Bone Hoe.

hunted buffaloes for our meat. After firearms became common, big game grew less plentiful, and for several years before my birth, few

buffaloes had been seen near our village. However, scouts brought in word that big herds were to be found farther up the river and on the Yellowstone, and our villagers, Mandans and Hidatsas, made ready for a hunt.

A chief, or leader, was always chosen for a tribal hunt, some one who was thought to have power with the gods. Not every one was willing to be leader. The tribe expected of him a prosperous hunt with plenty of meat, and no attacks from enemies. If the hunt proved an unlucky one, the failure was laid to the leader. "His prayers have no power with the gods. He is not fit to be leader!" the people would say.

This leader had to be chosen by a military society of men, called the Black Mouths. They made up a collection of rich gifts—gun, blankets, robes, war bonnet, embroidered shirt—and with much ceremony offered the gifts, successively, to men who were known to own sacred bundles; all refused.

They prevailed at length upon Ediakata to accept half the gifts. "Choose another to take the rest," he told the Black Mouths: "I will share the leadership with him!" They chose Short Horn.

The two leaders fixed the day of departure. On the evening before, a crier went through the village, calling out, "To-morrow at sunrise we break camp. Get ready, everybody!"

The march was up the Missouri, on the narrow prairie between the foothills and the river. Ediakata and Short Horn led, commanding, the one, one day, the other, the next. The camp followed in a long line, some on horseback, more afoot; a few old people rode on travois. Camp was made at night in tepees, or skin-covered tents.

My grandfather's was a large thirteen-skin tepee, pitched with fifteen poles. It sheltered twelve persons; my grandfather, Small Ankle, and his two wives, Red Blossom and Strikes-many-woman; his sons, Bear's Tail and Wolf Chief, and their wives; my mother, Buffalo Bird Woman, daughter of Small Ankle, and Son-of-a-Star, her husband; Flies Low, a younger son of Small Ankle; and Red Kettle and Full Heart, mere boys, brothers of Flies Low.

Ascending the west bank of the Missouri, my tribe reached the mouth of the Yellowstone at their eleventh camp; here the Missouri narrows, offering a good place

to cross. A long sand bar skirted the south shore; tents were pitched here about noon. There was not room on the narrow bar to pitch a camping circle, and the tepees stood in rows, like the houses of a village.

My grandfather pitched his tent near the place chosen for the crossing. The day was cold and windy; with flint and steel, my grandfather kindled a fire. Dry grass was laid around the wall of the tent and covered with robes, for beds. Small logs, laid along the edges of the beds, shielded them from sparks from the fire.

At evening the wind died; twilight crept over the sky, and the stars appeared. The new moon, narrow and bent like an Indian bow, shone white over the river, and the waves of the long mid-current sparkled silvery in the moonlight. Now and then with a *swi-i-s-sh*, a sheet of water, a tiny whirl-pool in its center, would come washing in to shore; while over all rose the roar, roar, roar of the great river, sweeping onward, the Indians knew not where.

At midnight a dog raised himself on his haunches, pointed his nose at the sky, and yelped. It was the signal for the midnight chorus; and in a moment every dog in camp had joined it, nose-in-air, howling mournfully at the moon. Far out on the prairie rose the wailing yip-yip-yip-*ya-a-ah!* of a coyote. The dogs grew silent again and curled up, to sleep.

And I came into the world.

Wrapped in a bit of robe, I was laid in my mother's arms, her first born; she folded me to her breast.

The morning sky was growing gray when my father came home. He raised the tent door and entered, smiling.

"I heard my little son cry, as I came," he said;
"It was a lusty cry! I am very happy."

My grandmother placed me in his arms.

My tribe began crossing the river the same morning. Tents were struck, one by one; and the owners, having loaded their baggage in bull boats, pushed boldly out into the current.

A bull boat was made by stretching a buffalo skin over a frame of willows. It was shaped like a tub and was not graceful; but it carried a heavy load.

Our boat had been brought up from the village on a travois, and my father ferried my mother and me across. He knelt in the bow, dipping his oar in the water directly before him; my mother sat in the tail of the boat with me in her arms. Our tent poles, tied in a bundle, floated behind us; and our dogs and horses came swimming after, sniffing and blowing as they breasted the heavy current. We landed tired, and rather wet.

The tribe was four days in crossing; and as the season was late, we at once took up our march to the place chosen for our winter camp. My mother and I now rode on a travois, drawn by a pony. A buffalo skin was spread on the bottom of the travois basket; this my father bound snugly about my mother's knees as she sat, Indian fashion, with her ankles turned to the right. I lay in her lap, cuddled in a wild-cat skin and covered by her robe.

We reached Round Bank, the place of our winter camp, in five days. My tribe's usual custom was to winter in small earth lodges, in the woods by the Missouri, a few miles from Like-a-fish-hook village; but

this winter we were to camp in our skin tents, like the Sioux. A tent, well sheltered, with a brisk fire under the smoke hole, was comfortable and warm.

No buffaloes had been killed on the way up to the Yellowstone; but much deer, elk, and antelope meat had been brought into camp, dried, and packed in bags for winter. Many, also, of the more provident families had stores of corn, brought with them from Like-a-fish-hook village. After snow fell, our hunters discovered buffaloes and made a kill. We thus faced winter without fear of famine.

The tenth day after my birth was my naming day; it came just as we were getting settled in our winter camp. An Indian child was named to bring him good luck. A medicine man was called in, feasted, and given a present to name the child and pray for him. As my grandfather was one of the chief medicine men of the tribe, my mother asked him to name me.

My grandfather's gods were the birds that send the thunder. He was a kind old man, and took me gently into his arms and said, "I name my grandson *Tsa-ka-ka-sa-ki*,—Good-bird!" My name thus became a kind of prayer; whenever it was spoken it reminded the bird spirits that I was named for them, and that my grandfather prayed that I might grow up a brave and good man.

The winter passed without mishap to any one in our tent. An old man named Holding Eagle had his leg broken digging in a bank for white clay; he was prying out a lump with a stick, when the bank caved in upon him. Toward spring, Wolf-with-his-back-to-the-wind and his brother were surprised by Sioux and killed. A man named Drum was also killed and scalped.

Spring came, but ice still lay on the Missouri when the Goose society gave their spring dance. The flocks of geese that came flying north at this season of the year were a sign that it was time to make ready our fields for planting corn. The Goose society was a society of women, and their dance was a prayer that the spirits of the geese would send good weather for the corn-planting. Most of the work of planting and hoeing our corn fell to the women.

Our winter camp now broke up, most of the tribe returning to the Yellowstone; but my grandfather and One Buffalo, with their families, went up the Missouri to hunt for buffaloes. They found a small herd, gave chase, and killed ten.

Four more tepees now joined us, those of Strikes Back-bone, Old Bear, Long Wing, Spotted Horn, and their families. To each tent owner, my grandfather gave the half of a freshly killed buffalo and one whole green buffalo skin. Camp was pitched; the meat was hung on stages to dry, and the women busied themselves making the skins into bull boats.



At Work with a Bone Hoe.

When the ice on the Missouri broke, our camp made ready to return to the village, for the women wanted to be about their spring planting. Bull boats were now taken to the river and loaded; and the

families, six or seven tepees in all, pushed out into the current.

My parents led, with three boats lashed together, in the first of which they sat and paddled; my father's rifle lay by him. The second boat was partly loaded with bags of dried meat, and upon these sat Flies Low, my uncle, with me in his arms. The third boat was loaded to the water with meat and skins.

The Missouri's course is winding; if a turn in it sends the current against the wind, the waves rise heavy and choppy, so that a single boat can hardly ride them. When approaching one of these turns, our party would draw together, laying tight hold of one another's boats until the danger was passed; bunched together in this manner, the boats ran less risk of upsetting.

Snow had disappeared from the ground, and the grass was beginning to show green when we left the Yellowstone. We floated down the great river in high spirits. All went well until we neared the mouth of the Little Missouri, thirty miles from the village. Then a storm arose, and as we rounded a bend, the current carried us into the very teeth of the wind. Our flimsy boats, sea-sawing up and down on the heavy waves, threatened to overturn.

My parents turned hastily to shore and plied their paddles. Suddenly my father leaned over his side of the boat, almost tipping it over and tumbling my mother in upon him; she caught at the edge of the boat to save herself, but had the presence of mind not to drop her paddle. Then she saw what had happened; I had fallen into the water, and my father was drawing me, wet but unhurt, into the boat.

I have said that my uncle, Flies Low, and I rode in

the second boat. I had grown restless, and he had loosened my cradle clothes to give me room to move my limbs. When we ran into the storm, our boat rocked so violently that I slipped from his arms, but my loosened clothes made me float.

"I did not mean to drop the baby," my uncle said afterwards. "I thought the boat had upset and I was frightened." He was only a lad, and my mother could not blame him.

We reached shore in a terrible storm of snow and wind. The boats were dragged up on the beach; the two tents were hastily pitched to shelter the women and children; and fires were lighted.

My father stopped only long enough to see us safe, and then pushed on through the storm with the horses, which my grandfather had been driving along the shore in sight of the boats. He reached the village safely and drove the horses into the shelter of some woods along the river.

Boys know that in summer, when they go swimming, it is warmer to stay in the water, than upon the bank, in a wind. There was a pond in the woods; and our horses waded into the water to escape the cold wind. When they came out the wind chilled their coats, so that three of them died.

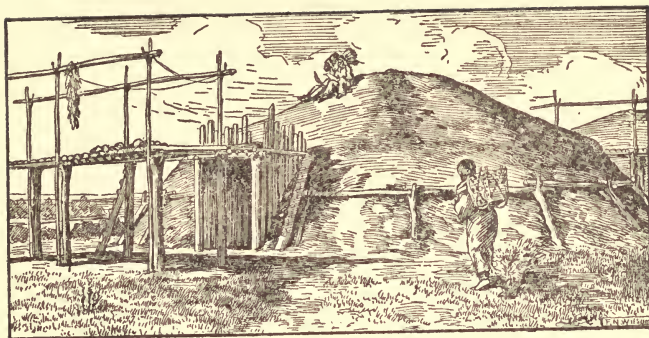
The storm lasted four days. When it was over, my



Flint and Steel, with Bag.

mother and the rest of the party re-embarked in their bull boats and floated safely down to Like-a-fish-hook village.

Of course I remember nothing of these things; but I have told the story as I heard it from the lips of my mother.



Hidatsa Earth Lodge.

II

CHILDHOOD

LIKE-A-FISH-HOOK village stood on a bluff overlooking the Missouri, and contained about seventy dwellings. Most of these were earth lodges, but a few were log cabins which traders had taught us to build.

My grandfather's was a large, well-built earth lodge, with a floor measuring about forty feet across. Small Ankle, his two wives and their younger children; his sons, Bear's Tail and Wolf Chief, and his daughter, my mother, with their families, dwelt together. It was usual for several families of relatives to dwell together in one lodge.

An earth lodge was built with a good deal of labor. The posts were cut in summer, and let lie in the woods

until snow fell; men then dragged them to the village with ropes. Holes were dug the next spring, and the posts raised. Stringers, laid along the tops of the posts, supported rafters; and upon these was laid a matting of willows and dry grass. Over all went a thick layer of sods.

The four great posts that upheld the roof had each a buffalo calf skin or a piece of bright-colored calico bound about it at the height of a man's head. These were offerings to the house spirit. We Hidatsas believed that an earth lodge was alive, and that the lodge's spirit, or soul, dwelt in the four posts. Certain medicine women were hired



Small Ankle's Couch.

to raise these posts in place when a lodge was built.

Our lodge was picturesque within, especially by the yellow light of the evening fire. In the center of the floor, under the smoke hole, was the fireplace; a screen of puncheons, or split logs, set on end, stood between it and the door. On the right was the corral, where horses were stabled at night. In the back of the lodge were the covered beds of the household, and my grandfather's medicines, or sacred objects. The most

important of these sacred objects were two human skulls of the Big Birds' ceremony, as it was called. Small Ankle was a medicine man and when our corn fields suffered from drought, he prayed to the skulls for rain.

Against the puncheon screen on the side next the fireplace, was a couch made of planks laid on small logs, with a bedding of robes. This couch was my grandfather's bed at night, and his lounging place by day. A buffalo skin overhead protected him from bits of falling earth or a leak in the roof, when it rained.

My two grandmothers also used the couch as a bench when making ready the family meals; and the water and grease spilled by them and trampled into the dirt floor made the spot between the couch and the fireplace as hard as brick. Small Ankle filed his finger nails here against the hard floor.

The earliest thing that I remember, is my grandfather sitting on his couch, plucking gray hairs from his head. Indians do not like to see themselves growing old, and Small Ankle's friends used to tease him. "We see our brother is growing gray—and old!" they would say, laughing. Small Ankle used to sit on the edge of his couch with his face tilted toward the smoke hole, and drawing his loose hair before his eyes, he would search for gray ones.

He had another habit I greatly admired. The grease dropped from my grandmothers' cooking, drew many flies into our lodge, and as my grandfather sat on his couch, the flies would alight on his bare shoulders and arms. He used to fight them off with a little wooden paddle. I can yet hear the little paddle's *spat* as it fell on some luckless fly, against his bare flesh. No war club had surer aim.

His couch, indeed, was the throne from which my grandfather ruled his household, and his rule began daily at an early hour. He arose with the birds, raked coals from the ashes and started a fire. Then we would hear his voice, "Awake, daughters; up, sons; out, all of you! The sun is up! Wash your faces!"

My fat grandmothers made a funny sight, washing their faces; stooping, with eyes tightly shut, each filled her mouth with water, blew it into her palms and rubbed them over her face. No towels were used.

The men of the household more often went down for a plunge in the river. Some of the young men of the village bathed in the river the whole year, through a hole in the ice in winter.

Many bathers, after their morning plunge, rubbed their wet bodies with white clay; this warmed and freshened the skin.

My mother usually washed my face for me; I liked it quite as little as any white boy.

Our morning meal was now eaten, hominy boiled with beans and buffalo fat, and seasoned with alkali salt—spring salt we called it, because we gathered it from the edges of springs. After the meal, I had nothing to do all day but play.

My best loved toy was my bow, of choke-cherry wood, given me when I was four years old. My arrows were of buck-brush shoots, unfeathered. These shoots were brought in green, and thrust into the hot ashes of the fireplace; when heated, they were drawn out and the bark peeled off, leaving them a beautiful yellow. Buck-brush arrows are light, and I was allowed to shoot them within the lodge.

My uncle, Full Heart, a boy two years older than

myself, taught me how to use my bow. In our lodge were many mice that nested in holes under the sloping roof, and my uncle and I hunted these mice as savagely as our fathers hunted buffaloes. I think I was not a very good shot, for I do not remember ever killing one.

But I had the ill luck to shoot my mother. She was stooping at her work, one day, when an arrow badly aimed struck her in the cheek, its point pierced the skin, and the shaft remained hanging in the flesh. I saw the blood start and heard my mother cry, "Oh, my son has shot me!" I dropped my bow and ran, for I thought I had killed her; but she drew out the shaft, laughing.

I was too young to have any fear of the Sioux, and I had not yet learned to be afraid of ghosts, but I was afraid of owls, for I was taught that they punished little boys. Sometimes, if I was pettish, my uncles would cry, "The owl is coming!" And in the back of the lodge a voice would call, "*Hoo, hoo, hoo!*" This always gave me a good fright, and I would run to my grandfather and cover my head with his robe, or hide in my father's bed.

It was not the custom of my tribe for parents to punish their own children; usually, the father called in a clan brother to do this. My uncle, Flies Low, a clan brother of my father, punished me when I was bad, but he seldom did more than threaten.

Sometimes my mother would say, "My son is bad, pierce his flesh!" and my uncle would take an arrow, pinch the flesh of my arm, and make as if he would pierce it. I would cry, "I will be good, I will be good!" and he would let me go without doing more than giving me a good fright.

A very naughty boy was sometimes punished by rolling him in a snow bank, or ducking him in water.

One winter evening I was vexed at my mother and would not go to bed. "Come," she said, trying to draw me away, but I fought, kicking at her and screaming. Quite out of patience, my mother turned to Flies Low. "*Apatip*—duck him!" she cried. A pail of water stood by the fireplace. Flies Low caught me up, my legs over his shoulder, and plunged me, head downward, into the pail. I broke from him screaming, but he caught me and plunged me in again. The water strangled me, I thought I was going to die!

"Stop crying," said my uncle.

My mother took me by the arm. "Stop crying," she said. "If you are bad, I will call your uncle again!" And she put me to bed.

We Indian children knew nothing of marbles or skates. I had a swing, made of my mother's packing strap, and a top, cut from the tip of a buffalo's horn. Many boys owned sleds, made of five or six buffalo ribs bound side by side. With these they coasted down the steep Missouri bank, but that was play for older boys.



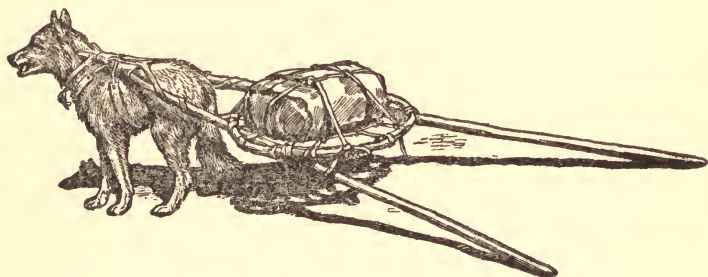
Sled of Buffalo Ribs.

Few wagons were owned by the tribe at this time. When journeying, we packed our baggage on the backs of ponies, or on travois dragged by dogs.

A travois was a curious vehicle. It was made of two poles lashed together in the shape of a V, and bearing a flat basket woven with thongs. A good dog with a travois could drag sixty or eighty pounds over the snow, or on the smooth prairie grass.

But a travois's chief use was in dragging in wood for a lodge fire. In our lodge my mother and my two grandmothers, with five dogs, went for wood about twice a week. They started at sunrise for the woods, a mile or two away, and returned about noon.

It happened one morning that my father and mother went to gather wood, and I asked to go along. "No," they said, "you would but be in our way. You stay



Dog Travois.

at home!" But I wept and teased until they let me go.

My parents walked before, the dogs following in a single file. They were gentle animals, used to having me play with them; and I was amusing myself running along, jumping on a travois, riding a bit, and jumping off again.

Our road led to a choke-cherry grove, but it was crossed by another that went to the river. As we neared the place where the roads crossed, we saw a woman coming down the river road, also followed by three or four dogs in travois. I had just leaped on the travois of one of our dogs.

The packs spied each other at the same instant; and

our dogs, pricking up their ears, burst into yelps and started for the other pack. I was frightened out of my wits. "*Ai, ai, ail*" I yelled; for I thought I was going to be eaten up. The dogs were leaping along at such speed that I dared not jump off.

The woman with the strange dogs ran between the packs crying, "*Na, na,—go way, go way!*" This stopped our dogs; and I sprang to the ground and ran to my mother. I would never ride a travois again.

Taking it altogether, children were well treated in my tribe. Food was coarse, but nourishing; and there was usually plenty of it. Children of poor families suffered for clothing, but rarely for food, for a family having meat or corn always shared with any who were hungry. If a child's parents died, relatives or friends cared for him.

My mother sighs for the good old times. "Children were then in every lodge," she says, "and there were many old men in the tribe. Now that we live in cabins and eat white men's foods, the children and old men die; and our tribe dies!"

But this is hardly true of the Christian families.

III

THE GODS

I HAVE said we Hidatsas believed that an earth lodge was alive; and that its soul, or spirit, dwelt in the four big roof posts. We believed, indeed, that this world and everything in it was alive and had spirits; and our faith in these spirits and our worship of them made our religion.

My father explained this to me. "All things in this world," he said, "have souls, or spirits. The sky has a spirit; the clouds have spirits; the sun and moon have spirits; so have animals, trees, grass, water, stones, *everything*. These spirits are our gods; and we pray to them and give them offerings, that they may help us in our need."

We Indians did not believe in one Great Spirit, as white



Seeking His God.

men seem to think all Indians do. We did believe that certain gods were more powerful than others. Of these was *It-si-ka-ma-hi-di*, our elder creator, the spirit of the prairie wolf; and *Ka-du-te-ta*, or Old-woman-who-never-dies, who first taught my people to till their fields. Long histories are given of these gods.

Any one could pray to the spirits, receiving answer usually in a dream. Indeed, all dreams were thought to be from the spirits; and for this reason they were always heeded, especially those that came by fasting and suffering. Sometimes a man fasted and tortured himself until he fell into a kind of dream while yet awake; we called this a vision.

A man whom the gods helped and visited in dreams, was said to have mystery power; and one who had much mystery power, we called a mystery man, or medicine man. Almost every one received dreams from the spirits at some time; but a medicine man received them more often than others.

A man might have mystery power and not use it wisely. There once lived in our village a medicine man who had one little son. On day in summer, the little boy with some playmates crossed a shallow creek behind the village in search of grass for grass arrows. It happened that the villagers' fields were suffering from drought, and that very day, some old men brought gifts to the medicine man and asked him to send them rain.

The medicine man prayed to his gods, and in an hour rain fell in torrents. The little boys, seeking to return, found the creek choked by the rising waters; greatly frightened, they plunged in, and all got

safely over but the medicine man's little son; he was drowned.

The medicine man mourned bitterly for his son, for he thought it was he that had caused the little boy's death.

Believing as he did that the world was full of spirits, every Indian hoped that one of them would come to him and be his protector, especially in war. When a lad became about seventeen years of age, his parents would say, "You are now old enough to go to war; but you should first go out and find your god!" They meant by this, that he should not risk his life in battle until he had a protecting spirit.

Finding one's god was not an easy task. The lad painted his body with white clay, as if in mourning, and went out among the hills, upon some bluff, where he could be seen of the gods; and for days, with neither food nor drink, and often torturing himself, he cried to the gods to pity him and come to him. His sufferings at last brought on delirium, so that he dreamed, or saw a vision. Whatever he saw in this vision was his god, come to pledge him protection. Usually this god was a bird or beast; or it might be the spirit of some one dead; the bird or beast was not a flesh-and-blood animal, but a spirit.

The lad then returned home. As soon as he was recovered from his fast, he set out to kill an animal like that seen in his vision, and its dried skin, or a part of it, he kept as his sacred object, or medicine, for in this sacred object dwelt his god. Thus if an otter god appeared to him, the lad would kill an otter, and into its skin, which the lad kept, the god entered. The otter skin was now the lad's medicine; he prayed to it

and bore it with him to war, that his god might be present to protect him.

Indians even made offerings of food to their sacred objects. They knew the sacred object did not eat the food; but they believed that the god, or spirit, in the sacred object, ate the spirit of the food. They also burned cedar incense to their sacred objects.

The story of my uncle Wolf Chief, as he was afterwards called, will show what sufferings a young man was willing to endure who went out to seek his god. He was but seventeen when his father, Small Ankle, said to him, "My son, I think you should go out and seek your god!" The next morning my uncle climbed a high butte overlooking the Missouri, and prayed:

"O gods, I am poor; I lead a poor life;
Make me a good man, a brave warrior!
I want to be a great warrior;
I want to capture many horses;
I want to teach much to my people;
I want to be their chief and save them in their need!"

For three days and nights, my uncle prayed; and in this time he had not a mouthful of food, not a drop of water to drink. The fourth day his father came to him. "My son," he said, "perhaps the gods would have you become a great man: and they are trying you, whether you are worthy, You have not suffered enough!"

"I am ready, father," said my uncle.

Small Ankle fixed a stout post in the ground and

fastened my uncle to it with thongs, so that all day he was in great suffering.

In the evening, Small Ankle came and cut him loose. "You have suffered enough, my son," he said; "I think the gods will now pity you and give you a dream!"

He took my uncle home and gave him something to eat and drink; then he laid the boy tenderly upon a pile of buffalo skins, before his own medicines.

For a long time, my uncle could not sleep for the pain from his wounds. A little before daylight, he fell into a troubled dream. He heard a man outside, walking around the earth lodge. The man was singing a mystery song; now and then he paused and cried, "You have done well, Strong Bull!"

Small Ankle was very happy when my uncle awoke and told him his dream. He knew that one of the gods had now come to his son to protect him and help him; and he called the boy by his new name, Strong Bull, that the god had given him.

Other men had different dreams. My grandfather once told me of a man who had a vision of four buffalo skulls that became alive.

Many years ago when our villages were on Knife River a man named Bush went out to find his god. He sought a vision from the buffalo spirits; and he



Buffalo Skulls.

thought to make himself suffer so that the spirits might pity him. He tied four buffalo skulls in a train, one behind another, and as Bush walked he dragged the train of skulls behind him.

He made his way painfully up the Missouri, mourning and crying to the gods. The banks of the Missouri are much cut up by ravines, and Bush suffered greatly as he dragged the heavy skulls over this rough country.

Fifty miles north of the villages, he came to the Little Missouri, a shallow stream, but subject to sudden freshets; he found the river flooded, and rising.

He stood on the bank and cried: "O gods, I am poor and I suffer! I want to find my god. Other men have suffered, and found their gods. Now I suffer much, but no god answers me. I am going to plunge into this torrent. I think I shall die, yet I will plunge in. O gods, if you are going to answer me, do it now and save me!"

He waded in, dragging the heavy skulls after him. The water grew deeper. He could no longer wade, he had to swim; he struck out.

He wondered that he no longer felt the weight of the skulls, and that he did not sink. Then he heard something behind him cry, "*Whoo-oo-oo!*" He looked around. The four buffalo skulls were swimming about him, buoying him up; but they were no longer skulls! Flesh and woolly hair covered them; they had big, blue eyes; they had red tongues. They were alive!

Bush himself told this story to my grandfather.

It should not be thought that Bush was trying to deceive when he said he saw these things. If one had been with him when he sprang into the torrent, and had cried, "Bush, the skulls are not alive; it is your delirium

that makes you think they live!" he would have answered, "Of course you cannot see they are alive! The vision is to me, not to you. The flesh and hair and eyes are spirit flesh. I see them; you see only the skulls!"

A man might go out many times thus, to find his god. If he had ill success in war, or if sickness or misfortune came upon him, he would think the gods had forgotten him; and he would throw away his moccasins, cut his hair as for mourning, paint his face with white clay, and again cry to the gods for a vision.

A medicine man's visions were like other men's; but we gave them more heed, because we thought he had more power with the gods. We looked upon a medicine man as a prophet; his dreams and visions were messages to us from the spirits; and we thought of his mystery power as white men think of a prophet's power to work miracles. Our medicine men sought visions for us, and messages from the gods, just as white men's preachers study to tell them what God speaks to them in His Book.

A medicine man had much influence in the tribe. He cured our sick, called the buffalo herds to us, gave us advice when a war party was being formed, and in times of drought prayed for rain.

Worshipping as we did many gods, we Indians did not think it strange that white men prayed to another God; and when missionaries came, we did not think it wrong that they taught us to pray to their God, but that they said we should not pray to our own gods. "Why," we asked, "do the missionaries hate our gods? We do not deny the white men's Great Spirit; why, then, should they deny our gods?"

Sometimes Indians who seek to join the mission church, secretly pray to their own gods; more often an Indian who accepts Jesus Christ and tries to follow Him, still fears his old gods, although he no longer prays to them.

Many older Indians, who do not know English, look upon Jesus Christ as they would upon one of their own gods; a story will show how His mission is sometimes misunderstood.

On this reservation lives a medicine woman, named Minnie Enemy Heart. When a girl, she went to the mission school and learned something about Jesus Christ. Afterward, as her fathers had done, she went into the hills to seek her god. She says that she fasted and prayed, and Jesus came to her in a vision. One side of his body was dark, like an Indian; the other side was white, like a white man. In His white hand he carried a lamb; in the other, a little dog.

Jesus explained the vision. "My body," He said, "half dark and half white, means that I am as much an Indian as I am a white man. This dog means that Indian ways are for Indians, as white ways are for white men; for Indians sacrifice dogs, as white men once sacrificed lambs. If the missionaries tell you this is not true, ask them who crucified me, were they Indians or white men?"

Many Indians believe this vision. More than fifteen have left the Catholic priest to follow Minnie Enemy Heart, and three or four have left our Protestant mission.

To us Indians, the spirit world seemed very near, and we did nothing without taking thought of the gods. If we would begin a journey, form a war party, hunt, trap

eagles, or fish, or plant corn, we first prayed to the spirits. A bad dream would send the bravest war party hurrying home.

If our belief seem strange to white men, theirs seemed just as strange to us.

IV

INDIAN BELIEFS

MANY medicine men added to their mystery power by owning sacred bundles, neatly bound bundles of skin or cloth, containing sacred objects or relics that had been handed down from old times. Every bundle had its history, telling how the bundle began and what gods they were that helped those who prayed before it. There were about sixty of these sacred bundles in the tribe, when I was a boy.



Medicine Post and Sacred Bundle.

The owner of a sacred bundle was called its keeper; he usually kept it hung on his medicine post, in the back part of his lodge. A sacred bundle was looked

upon as a kind of shrine, and in some lodges strangers were forbidden to walk between it and the fire.

When a keeper became old, he sold his sacred bundle to some younger man, that its rites might not die with him. The young man paid a hundred tanned buffalo skins and a gun or pony, and made a feast for the keeper; at this feast, the young man received the bundle with



Shrine and Sacred Bundle of the Big Birds' Ceremony.

the rites and songs that went with it. This was called, "making a ceremony."

White men think it strange that we Indians honored these sacred bundles; but I have heard that in Europe men once honored relics, the skull, or a bone, or a bit of hair of some saint, or a nail from Jesus' cross; that they did not pray to the relic, but thought that the spirit of the saint was near; or that he was more willing to hear their prayers when they knelt before the relic.

In much the same way, we Indians honored our sacred bundles. They contained sacred objects, or

relics, that had belonged each to some god—his scalp, or skull, the pipe he smoked, or his robe. We did not pray to the object, but to the god or spirit to whom it had belonged, and we thought these sacred objects had wonderful power, just as white men once thought they could be cured of sickness by touching the bone of some saint.

A medicine man's influence was greater if he owned a sacred bundle. Men then came to him not only because the spirits answered him when he fasted, but because, as its keeper, he had power from the gods of the sacred bundle.

The most famous of these sacred bundles belonged to my grandfather, Small Ankle. It was called the bundle of the Big Birds' ceremony. It was kept on a kind of stand in the back part of our lodge, and it contained two skulls and a carved wooden pipe. These objects were thought to be very holy.

When my tribe came up the Missouri to Like-a-fish-hook Bend, where they built their last village, they first camped there in tepees. A question arose as to how they should plan their village, and the more important medicine men of the tribe came and sat in a circle, to consider what to do. This was seven years after the small-pox year.

At that time, the skulls of the Big Birds' ceremony were owned by an old man named Missouri River. The other medicine men, knowing that these skulls were most important sacred objects in the tribe, said to Missouri River, "Your gods are most powerful. Tell us how we should lay out our village!"

Missouri River brought the two skulls from his tent, and holding one in either hand, he walked around in

a wide circle, returning again to the place where he had started. "We will leave this circle open, in the center of our village," he said. "So shall we plan it!"

He laid the skulls on the grass and said to Big Cloud, Small Ankle's son-in-law, "Your gods are powerful. Choose where you will build your earth lodge!"

Big Cloud arose. "I will build it here," he said, "where lie the two skulls. The door shall face the west, for my gods are eagles that send thunder, and eagles and thunders come from the west. And so I think we shall have rain, and our children and our fields shall thrive, and we shall live here many years." Big Cloud had once seen a vision of thunder eagles, awake and with his eyes open.

The medicine men said to Has-a-game-stick, "You choose a place for your lodge!"

Has-a-game-stick stood and said, "My god is the Sunset Woman. I want my lodge to face the sunset, that the Sunset Woman may remember me, and I will pray to her that the village may have plenty and enemies may never take it, and I think the Sunset Woman will hear me!"

The medicine men said to Bad Horn, "You stand up!"

Bad Horn stood and said, "My gods are bears, and bears always make the mouths of their dens open toward the north. I want my lodge door to open toward the north, that my bear gods may remember me. And I will pray to them that this village may stand many years!"

The medicine men then said to Missouri River, "Choose a place for your lodge!"

Missouri River took the two skulls, one in either hand, and singing a mystery song, walked around the

circle with his right hand toward the center, as moves the sun. Three times he walked around, the fourth time he stopped at a place and prayed, "My gods, you are my protectors, protect also this village. Send also rains that our grain may grow, and our children may eat and be strong and healthy. So shall we prosper, because my sacred bundle is in the village."

He turned to the company upon the grass. "Go, the rest of you," he said, "and choose where you will build your lodges; and keep the circle open, as I have marked!"

Before Missouri River died, he sold his sacred bundle to my grandfather, Small Ankle; and Small Ankle sold it to his son, Wolf Chief. After Wolf Chief became a Christian, he sold the bundle to a man in New York, that it might be put into a museum.

We had other beliefs, besides these of the gods.

We thought that all little babies had lived before, most of them as birds, or beasts, or even plants. My father, Son-of-a-Star, claimed he could even remember what bird he had been.

We believed that many babies came from the babes' lodges. There were several of these. One was near our villages on the Knife River. It was a hill of yellow sand, with a rounded top like the roof of an earth lodge. In one side was a little cave, and the ground about the cave's mouth was worn smooth, as if children played there. Sometimes in the morning, little footprints were found in the sand.

To this hill a childless wife would come to pray for a son or daughter. She would lay a pair of very beautiful child's moccasins at the mouth of the cave and pray: "I am poor. I am lonesome. Come to me, one

of you! I love you. I long for you!" We understood that children who came from this babes' lodge had light skin and yellowish hair, like yellow sand.

A very old man once said to me: "I remember my former life. I lived in a babes' lodge. It was like a small earth lodge inside. There was a pit before the door, crossed by a log. Many of the babes, trying to cross the pit, fell in. But I walked the whole length of the log; hence I have lived to be an old man." I have heard this story from other old men.

Very small children, who died before they teethed or were old enough to laugh, were not buried upon scaffolds with our other dead, but were wrapped in skins and placed in trees. We thought if such a baby died, that its spirit went back to live its former life again, as a bird, or plant, or as a babe in one of the babes' lodges.

Older children and men and women, when they died, went to the ghosts' village. This was a big town of earth lodges, where the dead lived very much as they had lived on earth. Older Indians of my tribe still believe in the ghosts' village.

There were men in my tribe who had died, as we believed, and gone to the ghosts' village, and come back to life again. From these men we learned what the ghosts' village was like.

My mother's grandfather came back thus, from the ghosts' village; his name was *It-si-di-shi-di-it-a-ka*, or Old Yellow Elk.

Old Yellow Elk had an otter skin for his medicine, or sacred object. He died in the small-pox year; and his family laid his body out on a hill with the otter skin under his head for a pillow. Logs were piled about

the body, to keep off wolves. Men were dying so fast that there was no time to make burial scaffolds.

That night a voice was heard calling from the hill, "*A-ha-he! 4-ha-he!* Come for me, I want to get up!"

The villagers ran to the grave and took away the logs, and Old Yellow Elk arose and came home.

"The ghosts' village is a fine town," he told his family. "I saw many people there, they gave me a spotted pony. My god, the otter, brought me back. He led me up the bed of the Missouri, under the water. I brought my pony with me and tied him to a log on my grave!"

His family went out to the grave the next morning and looked for the pony's tracks, but found none!

All these things I firmly believed, when I was a boy.

V

SCHOOL DAYS

I WAS six years old when Mr. Hall, a missionary, came to us, from the Santee Sioux. He could not speak the Mandan or the Hidatsa language, but he spoke Sioux, which some of our people understood. He was a good singer; and he had a song which he sang with Sioux words. Our people would crowd about him to hear it, for it was the first Christian song they had ever heard.

The song began:

*"Ho washte, ho washte,
On Jesus yatan miye;
Ho wakan, ho wakan,
Nina hin yeyan!"*

The words are a translation of an English hymn:



The Sun Man (Redrawn from a sketch by Goodbird).

“Sweetly sing, sweetly sing,
Jesus is our Saviour king;
Let us raise. let us raise,
High our notes of praise!”

It is a custom of my people to give a name to every stranger who comes among us, either from some singularity in his dress or appearance, or from something that he says or does. Our people caught the first two words of the missionary's song and named him after them, Ho Washte. He is still called by this name.

Mr. Hall had brought his wife with him, and they began building a house with timbers freighted up the river on a steamboat. Our chief, Crow's Belly, threatened to burn the house, but the missionary made him a feast and explained that he wanted to use the house for a school, where Indian children could learn English. Crow's Belly thought this a good plan, and made no further trouble.

The school was opened the next winter. It was soon noised in the village that English would be taught in the mission school, and several young men started to attend, my uncle, Wolf Chief, among them. They went each morning with hair newly braided, faces painted, and big brass rings on their fingers. Most of them found school work rather hard, and soon tired of it.

The next fall, my parents started me to school, for my father wanted me to learn English. The mission house was a half mile from our village; I went each morning with a little Mandan companion, named Hollis Montclair, We wore Indian dress, leggings, moccasins, and leather shirt.

At noon Hollis and I would return to the village for our noon meal; and sometimes we would go to school again in the afternoon. We went pretty faithfully all the fall, and until Christmas time, when our teacher told us we were to have a Christmas tree.

Hollis and I had never seen a Christmas tree; and when Christmas day came, we could hardly wait until the time came for us to go to the school house. It was a cheerful scene then, that met our eyes. The tree was a cedar cut on the Missouri bottoms, lighted, and trimmed with strips of bright colored paper. Mr. Hall and his family sat at the front, smiling. My teacher moved about among the children, greeting each as he arrived, and speaking a kind word to those that were shy. About fifteen school children of the age of Hollis and myself were present.

We had music and singing, and Mr. Hall explained what Christmas means, that it is the birthday of Jesus, the Son of God; and that we should be happy because He loved us. Presents were then given us; each child was called by name, and handed a little gift taken from the tree.

And now I grieve to say, that Hollis and I acted as badly as two white children. There was a magnet hanging on the tree, a piece of steel shaped like a horse shoe, that picked up bits of iron. Hollis and I thought it the most wonderful thing we had ever seen. We each hoped to receive it; but it was given to another child. This vexed us; and we left upon the floor the gifts we had received, and stalked out of the room. The last thing I saw as I went out of the door was my teacher with her handkerchief to her eyes. I did not feel happy when I thought of this; but I was an Indian

boy, and I was not going to forgive her for not giving me the magnet!

I told the story of the magnet to my parents; and finding I was unwilling to go back to the mission, they sent me to the government school that our agent had just opened; but I did not go there long. I was taken sick, and my former teacher came to see me in our earth lodge. She was so kind and forgiving that I forgot all about the magnet, and when I got well I went back to the mission school.

I grew to love my teacher, although I was always a little afraid of her. We boys were not allowed to talk in study hours; but when our teacher's back was turned, we would whisper to one another. Sometimes our teacher turned quickly, and if she caught any of us whispering, she would come and give each of us a spat on the head with a book; but it did not hurt much, so we did not care.

We used to sing a good deal in the school. One song I liked was, "I need Thee every hour." I loved to sing, although the songs we learned were very different from our Indian songs. Indians are fond of music; I have known my grandfather and three or four cronies to sit at our lodge fire an entire night, drumming and singing, and telling stories.

I found English a rather hard language to learn. Many of the older Indians would laugh at any who tried to learn to read. "You want to forsake your Indian ways and be white men," they would say; but there were many in the village who wanted their children to learn English.

My grandfather was deeply interested in my studies. "It is their books that make white men strong," he

would say. "The buffaloes will soon be killed; and we Indians must learn white ways, or starve." He was a progressive old man.

I am sorry to say that I played hookey sometimes. Big dances were often held in the village; especially, when a war party came in with a scalp, there was great excitement. The scalp was raised aloft on a pole, and the women danced about it, screaming, and singing glad songs. Warriors painted their faces with charcoal, and danced, sang, yelled, and boasted of their deeds. Everybody feasted and made merry.

When I knew that a dance was going to be held, I would hide somewhere in the village, instead of going to school. The next day my teacher would say, "Where were you yesterday?" "At the dance," I would answer. She would then tell me how naughty I was; but she never punished me, for she knew if she did, I would leave the school. My parents also scolded, but did not punish me. I am afraid I was a bad little boy!

One day, on my way to school, I was overtaken by a very old white man, with white hair. I had been going to school about a year and could talk a little English.

"What is your name, little fellow?" the old man asked. He had a friendly voice.

"My name is Goodbird," I answered.

"But what is your English name?"

"I have none."

"Then I will give you mine," the old man said, smiling. "It is Edward Moore."

It is a common custom for an Indian to give his name to a friend; so I did not know the old man's words were

said in fun. At the school, I told Mr. Hall what the old man had said, and he laughed. "I think Moore is not a good name for you," he said. "Moore sounds like *moor*, a marshy place where mists rise in the air, but Edward is a very good name."

So I have called myself Edward Goodbird ever since.

Every Friday Mr. Hall gave a dinner in the mission house to his pupils. We Indian children thought these dinners wonderful. Many of us had never tasted white men's food; some things, as sour pickles, we did not like. Mr. Hall wanted us to learn to eat white bread and biscuits, so that we would ask our mothers to bake bread at home. He hoped this would be a means of getting us to like white men's ways.

On Saturdays we had no school, and Mr. Hall would go around the village, shaking hands with the Indians and inviting them to come to church the next morning. Later, Poor Wolf acted as his crier, and on Saturday evenings he would go around, calling out, "*Ho Washte, Ho Washte!* Come you people, to-morrow, and sit for him!" He meant for them to come to church the next morning and sit in chairs.

Mr. Hall's janitor, a young Indian named Bear's Teeth, swept out the mission house, made the fires, and got the school room ready for the services. There was no bell on the mission, so a flag was run up as a signal for the congregation to gather.

Not many came to the services, fifteen or twenty were a usual congregation, sometimes only ten. Mr. Hall preached, and to make his sermons plainer, he often drew pictures on the blackboard.

My father thought the missionary's religion was good, but would not himself forsake the old ways. "The old

gods are best for me," he used to say, but he let me go to hear Mr. Hall preach. I cannot say that I always understood the sermon. Sometimes Mr. Hall would say, "Thirty years ago, my friends, I saw the light!" I thought he meant he had seen a vision.

But I learned a good deal from Mr. Hall's preaching; and my lessons and the songs I learned at school made me think of Jesus; but I thought an Indian could be a Christian and also believe in the old ways.

It came over me one day, that this could not be. A story of our Indian god, *It-si-ka-ma-hi-di*, tells us that the sun is a man, with his body painted red, like fire; that the earth is flat, and that the sky covers it like a bowl turned bottom up; but in my geography, at school, I learned that the earth is round.

In our earth lodge, that night, I said to my parents, "This earth is round; the sun is a burning ball!" My cousin Butterfly was disgusted. "That is white man's talk," he grunted. "This earth is flat. White men are foolish!" This I would in no wise admit, and I came home almost daily with some new proof that the earth was round.

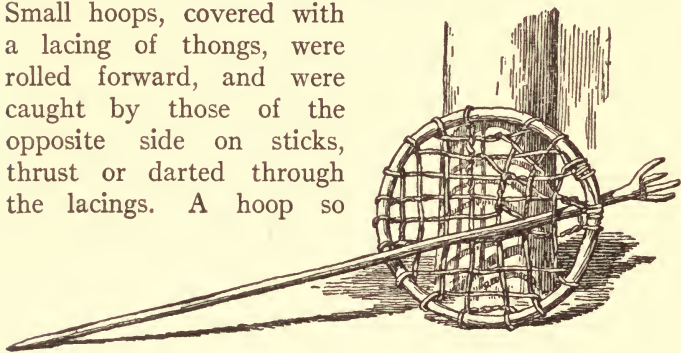
As I grew older and began to read books, I thought of myself as a Christian, but more because I went to the mission school, than because I thought of Jesus as my Saviour. I loved to read the stories of the Bible; and Mr. Hall taught me the Ten Commandments. Some of the Indian boys learned to swear, from hearing white men; but I never did, because Mr. Hall told me it was wrong. I thought that those who did as the Bible bade, would grow up to be good men.

I had a cousin, three years older than myself, in the Santee Indian school, who had become a Christian.

One day I received a letter from him. "I believe in Jesus' way," he wrote. "I believe Jesus is a good Saviour. I have tried His way, and I want you to try to join in and have Him for your Saviour." This letter set me to thinking.

In these years, my life outside the school room was wholly Indian. We Hidatsa children knew nothing of base ball, or one hole cat, or other white children's games, but we had many Indian games that we played. Some of these games I think better than those now played on our reservation.

In March and early April, we boys played the hoop game. A level place, bare of snow, was found, and the boys divided into two sides, about thirty yards apart. Small hoops, covered with a lacing of thongs, were rolled forward, and were caught by those of the opposite side on sticks, thrust or darted through the lacings. A hoop so



Hoop and Stick of the Hoop Game.

caught, was sent hurtling through the air, the object being to hit some one of the opposing players.

The game was played but a few weeks, for as soon as the ice broke on the Missouri, we boys went to the high bank of the river, and hurled our hoops into the current. We were told, and really believed, that they

became dead buffaloes as soon as they had passed out of sight, beyond the next point of land. Such buffaloes, drowned in the thin ice of autumn and frozen in, came floating down the river in large numbers at the spring break-up. The carcasses were always fat, and the frozen flesh was sweet and tender.

After the first thunder in spring, we played *u-a-ki-he-ke*, or throw stick. Willow rods were cut, peeled, and dried, and then stained red, with ochre, or a bright green, with grass. These rods, darted against the ground, rebounded to a great distance. The player won whose rod went farthest. *U-a-ki-he-ke* is still played on the reservation.

In June, when the rising waters have softened the river's clay banks, we fought sham battles. Each boy cut a willow withe, as long as a buggy whip, and on the smaller end squeezed a lump of wet clay. With the withe as a sling, he could throw the clay ball to an astonishing distance. Hidatsa and Mandan boys often fought against one another, using these clay balls as missiles.

It was exciting play, for we fought like armies, each side trying to force the other's position; when an attack was made, a storm of mud balls would come whizzing through the air like bullets. A hit on the bare flesh stung like a real wound. Once one of my playmates was **hit in the eye**, and badly hurt. I was just over



War Bonnet
(On Lodge Post).

fourteen, when my parents let me join in the grass dance, or war dance, as the whites call it. The other dancers made me an officer, and my father was so pleased, that he hung up a fine eagle's feather war bonnet in our lodge. "If enemies come against us," he said, "my son shall go out to fight wearing this war bonnet!"

One evening, Bear's Arm, a lad of eighteen years, came in from hunting a strayed pony; he was much excited. "I saw two Sioux in war dress, hiding in a coulee," he told us.

Our warriors ran for their ponies. "Put on your war bonnet," my father said to me. "I am going to take you in the party. Keep close to me; and if there is a fight, see if you cannot strike an enemy!"

We rode all night, Bear's Arm leading us. We reached the coulee and surrounded it a little before daybreak, and with the first streak of dawn, we closed in, our rifles ready; but we found no enemies.

This was my one war exploit.



Buffaloes.

VI

HUNTING BUFFALOES

THE summer I was twelve years old, our village went on a buffalo hunt, for scouts had brought in word that herds had been sighted a hundred miles west of the Missouri. My father, Son-of-a-Star, was chosen leader of the hunt.

My tribe no longer used travois, for the government had issued wagons to us. These we took apart, loading the wheels into bull boats while the beds were floated over the river. We made our first camp at the edge of the foot hills, on the other side of the river.

The next morning, we struck tents, loaded them into our wagons, and began the march.

My father led, carrying his medicine bundle at his saddle head; behind him rode two or three elder Indians, leaders of the tribe, also on horseback. Then followed the wagons in a long line; and on either side rode the young men, on their tough, scrubby, little ponies.

Some of our young men as they rode, drove small companies of horses. Neighbors commonly put their horses together, and a young man, or two or three young men, acted as herders. Sometimes a girl, mounted astraddle like a man, drove them.

Now and then a youth might be seen reining in his pony to let the line of wagons pass, while he kept a sharp watch for his sweetheart. She hardly glanced at him as she rode by, for it was not proper for a young man's sweetheart to let him talk to her in the marching line. The time for courtship was in camp, in the evening.



Clay Pot with Thong Handle.

Toward five or six in the afternoon, we made camp. The wagons were drawn up in a big circle, and the women pitched the tents, while the men unhitched and hobbled their horses, and brought firewood. The women brought water and lighted the fires.

Water was carried in pails. I have heard that in old times, they used clay pots made of a kind of red clay, and burned; a thong went around the neck of the pot, for a handle.

My mother, an active woman, often had her fire started before her neighbors. While she got supper, my father sat and smoked. Friends frequently joined him, and they would sit in a circle, passing the pipe around, telling funny stories and laughing. My father was a capital story teller.

For supper we had deer or antelope meat, boiled or roasted, and my mother often fried wheat-flour dough into a kind of biscuits that were rather hard. Corn picked green the year before, and boiled and dried, was stewed in a kettle, making a dish much like the canned corn we buy at the store. More often we had succotash, hominy boiled with fat and beans. We drank black coffee, sweetened; my mother put the coffee beans into a skin, pounded them fine with an ax, and boiled them in an iron pot. You see, we were getting civilized.

When supper was ready, my mother would call "*Mi-ha-dits*—I have done!" and my father would put up his pipe and come to eat. My mother gave him meat, steaming hot, in a tin dish, and poured coffee into a cup; another cup held meat broth, which made a good drink also. We did not bring wooden feast bowls with us, as some families did.

My mother and I ate with my father, much as white families do; a robe or blanket was spread for each to sit upon.

I wore moccasins and leggings; and my hair was braided, Indian fashion, in two tails over my shoulders, but my mother had made me a white man's vest, of black cloth, embroidered all over with elk teeth. I was proud of this vest, and cared not a whit that I had no coat to wear over it.

The seventh day out, we made camp near the Cannon Ball River. My father had sent two mounted scouts ahead, with a spy glass, to see if they could find the herds; at evening, they returned with the report, "There is a big herd yonder!" Everybody got ready for the hunt the next morning, and my father made me happy by telling me that I might go along.



We arose early. My father saddled two ponies, one of them a pack animal; and I mounted a third, with a white man's saddle. My father's were pack saddles, of elk horn, covered with raw hide; ropes, looped up like a figure 8, were tied behind them to be used in binding the packs of meat we would bring home from the hunt.

There were about forty hunters in our party, mounted, and leading each a pack horse; eight boys, of twelve or fifteen years of age, and three old men. I remember one of the old men carried a bow and arrows, probably from old custom. Only the hunters expected to take part in the actual chase of the buffaloes; they were armed with rifles.

Quirt
(Indian
Whip.)

The party's leader, *E-di-a-ka-ta*—the same who led our tribe to the Yellowstone—rode ahead, and we followed at a brisk trot. Five miles out of camp, the two scouts were again sent ahead with the spy glass. We saw them coming back at a gallop and knew that the herd was found, and we urged our horses at the top of their speed. I remember the *slap* of the quirts on the little ponies' flanks; and the *beat-beat, beat-beat!* of their

hoofs on the hard ground. Indians do not shoe their horses.

We drew rein behind a hill, a half mile to leeward of the herd, and, having dismounted, hobbled our led horses. Our hunters laid aside their shirts and leggings, stripped the saddles from their ponies' backs, and twisted bridles of thong into their ponies' mouths; it was our tribe's custom to ride bare-back in the hunt.

E-di-a-ka-ta went a little way off and stood, facing in the direction of the herd; from a piece of red cloth he tore a long strip, ripped this again into three or four pieces and laid them on the ground. I saw his lips move, and knew he was praying, but I could not hear his words. The pieces of red cloth were an offering to the spirits of the buffaloes.

Our hunters remounted and drew up in a line facing the herd, *E-di-a-ka-ta* on the right, and at a signal, the line started forward, neck-and-neck, at a brisk gallop. A guard, named *Tsa-wa*, or Bear's Chief, rode in advance; if a hunter pressed too far forward in the line, *Tsa-wa* struck the hunter's pony in the face with his quirt.

We boys and the three old men rode a little behind the line of hunters; we did not expect to take part in the hunt, but wanted to see the kill.

As we cleared the brow of the hill we sighted the buffaloes, about four hundred yards away, and *E-di-a-ka-ta* gave the signal, "*Ku'kats*—Now then!" Down came the quirts on the little ponies' flanks, making them leap forward like big cats. The line broke at once, each hunter striving to reach the herd first and kill the fattest. An iron-gray horse, I remember, was in the lead.

We boys followed at breakneck speed—unwilling-

ly on my part; my pony had taken the bit in his mouth and was going over the stony ground at a speed that I feared would throw him any moment and break his neck and mine. I tugged at the reins and clung to the saddle, too scared to cry out.

Bang! A fat cow tumbled over. *Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!* The frightened herd started to flee, swerved to the right, and went thundering away up wind, in a whirl of dust. Buffaloes, when alarmed, fly up wind if the way is open; their sight is poor, but they have a keen scent, and running up wind they can nose an Indian a half mile away.

For such heavy beasts, buffaloes have amazing speed, and only our fastest horses were used in hunting them; indeed, a young bull often outran our fastest ponies.

Only cows were killed. The flesh of bulls is tough and was not often eaten; that of calves crumbled when dried, making it unfit for storing.

Some buffalo calves, forsaken by the herd, were running wildly over the prairie, bleating for their mothers; two of our hunters caught one of the smallest with a lariat, and brought it to me. "Here, boy," they said, "keep this calf."

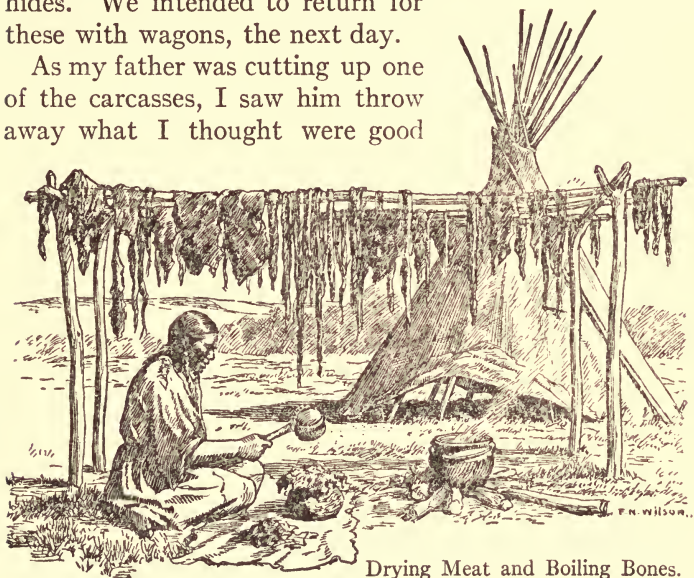
I caught the rope and drew the calf after me; but my pony, growing frightened, reared and kicked the little animal; paying out more rope, I led the calf at a safer distance from my horse's heels.

The hunters came straggling back, and my father seeing the calf, cried out, "Let that calf go! Buffaloes are sacred animals. You should not try to keep one captive!" I was much disappointed, for I wanted to take it into camp.

My father had killed three fat cows, and these he

now sought out and dressed. The shoulders, hams, and choicer cuts he loaded on our led horse, covering the pack with a green hide and tying it down with the raw-hide ropes brought for the purpose; the rest he left in a pile on the prairie, covered with the other two hides. We intended to return for these with wagons, the next day.

As my father was cutting up one of the carcasses, I saw him throw away what I thought were good



Drying Meat and Boiling Bones.

cuts; I did not like to see good meat wasted, and when I thought he was not looking, I slyly put the pieces back on the pile.

We returned to camp slowly, at times urging our ponies to a gentle trot, more often letting them walk. My father had to dismount several times to secure our pack of meat, which threatened to slip from our pack horse's back. In our tent that evening, I heard him

telling my mother of my part in the hunt. "Our son," he said, "is no wasteful lad. He put back some tough leg pieces that I had thrown away. He would not see good meat wasted!" And they both laughed.

Stages were built in the camp, and for two days, every body was busy drying meat or boiling bones for marrow fat. The dried meat was packed in skin bags, or made into bundles; the marrow fat was run into bladders; and all was taken to Like-a-fish-hook village, to be stored for winter.



Goodbird at the Age of Twenty. (Redrawn from Portrait by Gilbert Saul. Report Indian Census, 1890.)

VII

FARMING

THE time came when we had to forsake our village at Like-a-fish-hook Bend, for the government wanted the Indians to become farmers. "You should take allotments," our agent would say. "The big game is being killed off, and you must plant bigger fields or starve. The government will give you plows and cattle."

All knew that the agent's words were true, and little by little our village was broken up. In the summer of my sixteenth year nearly a third of my tribe left to take up allotments.

We had plenty of land; our reservation was twice the size of Rhode Island, and our united tribes, with the Rees who joined us, were less than thirteen hundred

souls. Most of the Indians chose allotments along the Missouri, where the soil was good and drinking water easy to get. Unallotted lands were to be sold and the money given to the three tribes.

Forty miles above our village, the Missouri makes a wide bend around a point called Independence Hill, and here my father and several of his relatives chose their allotments. The bend enclosed a wide strip of meadow land, offering hay for our horses. The soil along the river was rich and in the bottom stood a thick growth of timber.

My father left the village, with my mother and me, in June. He had a wagon, given him by the agent; this he unbolted and took over the river piece by piece, in a bull boat; our horses swam.

We camped at Independence in a tepee, while we busied ourselves building a cabin. My father cut the logs; they were notched at the ends, to lock into one another at the corners. A heavier log, a foot in thickness, made the ridge pole. The roof was of willows and grass, covered with sods.

Cracks between the logs were plastered with clay, mixed with short grass. The floor was of earth, but we had a stove.

We were a month putting up our cabin.

Though my father's coming to Independence was a step toward civilization, it had one ill effect: it removed me from the good influences of the mission school, so that for a time I fell back into Indian ways. Winter, also, was not far off; the season was too late for us to plant corn, and the rations issued to us every two weeks rarely lasted more than two or three days. To keep our family in meat, I turned hunter.

There were no buffaloes on the reservation, but black-tailed deer were plentiful, and in the hills were a good many antelopes. I had a Winchester rifle, a 40.60 caliber, and I was a good shot.

To hunt deer, I arose before daylight and went to the woods along the Missouri. Deer feed much at night, and as evening came on, they would leave the thick underbrush by the river and go into the hills to browse on the rich prairie grasses. I would creep along the edge of the woods, rifle in hand, ready to shoot any that I saw coming in from the feeding grounds.

I was careful to keep on the leeward side of the game; a deer running up wind will scent an Indian as quickly as a buffalo.

I loved to hunt, and although a mere boy, I was one of the quickest shots in my tribe. I remember that one morning I was coming around a clump of bushes when I saw a doe and buck ahead, just entering the thicket. I fired, hardly glancing at the sights; I saw the buck fall, but when I ran up I found the doe lying beside him, killed by the same bullet.

Independence was a wild spot. The hill from which the place took its name had been a favorite fasting place for young men who sought visions; at its foot, under a steep bank, swept the Missouri, full of dangerous whirlpools. Such spots, lonely and wild, we Indians thought were haunts of the spirits.

Once, when I was a small boy, my father took me to see the Sun dance. A man named Turtle-no-head was suspended from a post in a booth, and dancing around it. Turtle-no-head's hands were behind him, and he strained at the rope as he danced. Women were crying, "*A-la-la-la-la-lal*" Old men were calling

out, "Good; Turtle-no-head is a man. One should be willing to suffer to find his god; then he will strike many enemies and win honors!"

I was much stirred by what I saw, and by the old men's words.

"Father," I said, "when I get big, I am going to suffer and seek a vision, like Turtle-no-head!"

"Good!" said my father, laughing.

At Independence, I thought of this vow made years before. One day, I said to my father, "I want you to suspend me from the high bank, over the Missouri."

When evening came, my father stripped me to my clout and moccasins, and helped me paint my body with white clay. He called a man named Crow, and they took me to the bank, over the Missouri. My father fastened me to the rope, and I swung myself over the bank, hanging with my weight upon the rope. "Suffer as long as you can!" called my father, and left me.

I did not feel much pain, but I became greatly wearied from the strain upon my back and thighs. Toward morning I could stand it no longer. I drew myself up on the bank, and went home and to bed; and I slept so soundly that no dream came from the spirits.

A year later, I again sought a vision. This time my father took me to a high hill, a mile or two from the river. He drove a post into the ground, fastened me to it, as before, and left me, just at nightfall.

I threw myself back upon the rope and danced around the post, hoping to fall into a swoon and see a vision.

It was autumn, and a light snow was falling; the cold flakes on my bare shoulders made me shiver till my teeth chattered. The night was black as pitch. A

coyote howled. I was so lonely that I wished a ghost would sit on the post and talk with me, though I was dreadfully afraid of ghosts, especially at night. I grew so cold that my knees knocked together.

About two o'clock in the morning, I untied the rope and went home. For an hour I felt sick, but I soon fell into a sleep, again dreamless.

I was eating my breakfast when my father came in. "I have seen no vision, father," I told him; he said nothing.

The next year the government forbade the Indians to torture themselves when they fasted. My father was quite vexed. "The government does wrong to forbid us to suffer for our gods!" he said. But I was rather glad. "The Indian's way is hard," I thought. "The white man's road is easier!" And I thought again of the mission school.

Other things drew my thoughts to civilized ways. Our agent issued to every Indian family having an allotment, a plow, and wheat, flax, and oats, for seeding. My father and I broke land near our cabin, and in the spring seeded it down.

We had a fair harvest in the fall. Threshing was done on the agency machine, and, having sacked our grain, my father and I hauled it, in four trips, to Hebron, eighty miles away. Our flax we sold for seventy-five cents, our wheat for sixty cents, and our oats for twenty-five cents a bushel. Our four loads brought us about eighty dollars.

I became greatly interested in farming. There was good soil on our allotment along the river, although our fields sometimes suffered from drought; away from the river, much of our land was stony, fit only for grazing.

My parents had been at Independence eight years, when one day the agent sent for me. I went to his office.

"I hear you have become a good farmer," he said, as I came in. "I want to appoint you assistant to our agency farmer. Your district will include all allotments west of the Missouri between the little Missouri and Independence. I will pay you three hundred dollars a year. Will you accept?"

"I will try what I can do," I answered.

"Good," said the Major. "Now for your orders! You are to measure off for every able-bodied Indian, ten acres of ground to be plowed and seeded. If an Indian is lazy and will not attend to his plowing, report him to me and I will send a policeman. In the fall, you are to see that every family puts up two tons of hay for each horse or steer owned by it."

I did not know what an acre was. "It is a piece of ground," the agent explained, "ten rods wide and sixteen rods long." From this I was able to compute pretty well how much ten acres should be; but I am not sure that all the plots I measured were of the same size.

I began my new duties at once, and at every cabin in my district, I measured off a ten-acre plot and explained the agent's orders. Not a few of the Indians had done some plowing at Like-a-fish-hook village, and all were willing to learn. Once a month, I took a blacksmith around to inspect the Indians' plows.

Rains were abundant that summer, and the Indians had a good crop. Some families harvested a hundred bushels of wheat from a ten-acre field; others, seventy-five bushels; and some had also planted oats.

The government began to issue cattle in payment of lands sold for us. The first issue was one cow to each family, and the agent ordered me to see that every family built a barn.

These barns were put up without planks or nails. A description of my own will show what they were like; it rested on a frame of four forked posts, with stringers laid in the forks; puncheons, or split logs, were leaned against the stringers for walls; rough-cut rafters supported a roofing of willows and dry grass, earthed over with sods.

More cattle were issued to us until we had a considerable herd at Independence. The cattle were let run at large, but each steer or cow was branded by its owner. Calves ran with their mothers until fall; the herd was then corralled and each calf was branded with its mother's brand. My own brand was the letters SU on the right shoulder.

Herders guarded our cattle during the calving season; we paid them ten cents for every head of stock herded through the summer months.

I had been assistant farmer six years and our herd had grown to about four hundred head, when Bird Bear and Skunk, our two herders, reported that some of our cattle had strayed. "We have searched the coulees and thickets, but cannot find them," they said. Branding time came; we corralled the herd and found about fifty head missing.

We now suspected that our cattle had been stolen. Cattle thieves, we knew, were in the country; they had broken into a corral one night, on a ranch not far from Independence and killed a cowboy named Long John.

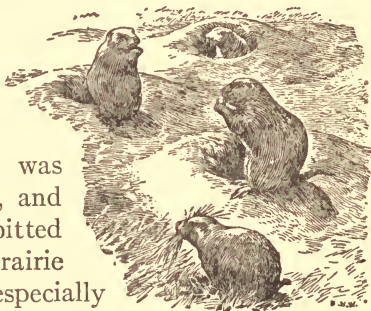
Winter had passed, when the agent called me one day

into his office. "Goodbird," he said, "I want you to take out a party of our agency police and find those thieves who stole your cattle. Start at once!"

I got my party together, eight in all; Hollis Montclair, my boyhood chum; Frank White Calf, Crow Bull, Sam Jones, White Owl, Little Wolf, No Bear, and myself. Only Hollis and I spoke English.

We started toward the Little Missouri, where we suspected the thieves might be found. I drove a wagon with our provisions and tent; my men were mounted. We reached the Little Missouri before nightfall, and camped.

The next morning, we turned westward; before noon, we crossed a prairie dog village, and shot three or four prairie dogs for dinner. The hair was singed off the carcasses, and they were drawn, and spitted on sticks over the fire. Prairie dogs are not bad eating, especially in the open air, by a good wood fire; I have never become so civilized that I would not rather eat out of doors.



Prairie Dogs.

Toward evening we met a cowboy. "How!" I called, as I drew in my team. "Have you seen any stray cattle, with Indian brands, ID, 7 bar, 7, or the like?" And I told him of our missing cattle.

"I know where they are," said the cowboy. "You will find them on a ranch near Stroud's post-office; but don't tell who told you!"

"Have no fear," I answered.

Stroud's post-office was farther west, near the Mon-

tana border; we reached it the third or fourth day out.

We made camp, and after supper, I went in and told Mr. Stroud our errand.

"Yes," he said, "your cattle are three miles from here, on a ranch owned by Frank Powers; he hired two cowboys to steal them for him."

The next morning my men and I mounted, and leaving our wagon at Stroud's, started for Powers' ranch. I was unarmed; the others of my party had their rifles.

We stopped at the cabin of a man named Crockin, to inquire our way. A white man came in; after he had gone out again, I asked Crockin, "Who is that man?"

"He is Frank Powers," said Crockin.

I turned to my men and said in their own language, "That is the man who stole our cattle."

Little Wolf drew his cleaning rod. "I am going to give that bad white man a beating," he cried angrily.

"You will not," I answered. "We will go into Powers' pasture and round up his cattle; and I will cut out all that I think are ours. If that bad white man comes out and says evil words against me, do nothing. If he shoots at me, kill him quick; but do not you shoot first!"

My men loaded their rifles, and about two o'clock I led them into the pasture. Powers' cattle were all bunched in a big herd; we drove them to a grassy flat, and I began cutting out those that were ours.

Powers saw us and came out, revolver in hand, and two or three white men joined him. He was so angry that he acted like a mad man; he grew red in the face, talked loud, and swore big oaths; but he did not shoot, for he knew my men would kill him.

I cut about twenty-five head out of the herd, all that I found with altered brands on the right shoulder or thigh. Maybe I took some of Powers' cattle by mistake, but I did not care much.

Powers left us after a while. My men rounded up our cattle, and we drove them back to Stroud's and camped.

After supper, I asked Mr. Stroud to write a letter to our agent, telling him what I had done. "Tomorrow," I told my men, "we will set out for home. You drive our cattle back to the reservation in short stages, so that they will not sicken with the heat. I will go ahead with Mr. Stroud's letter."

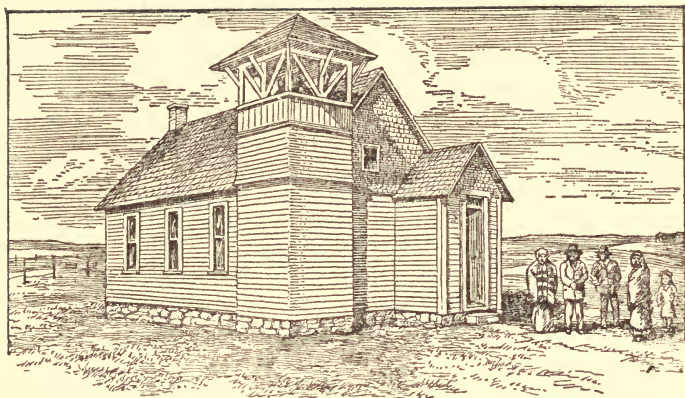
I set out before sunrise; at four o'clock I reached Independence, eighty miles away; and at sunset, I was at Elbowoods.

It was Decoration day, and the Indians were having a dance. The agent was sitting in his office with the inspector, from Washington.

"I have found our cattle," I said; and I gave him Mr. Stroud's letter.

He read it and handed it to the inspector.

"Report this matter to the United States marshal," the inspector said to him. "Tell him to have Powers arrested."



The Chapel at Independence.

VIII

THE WHITE MAN'S WAY

MY thirty-fifth winter—as we Indians count years—found me still assistant farmer; but time had brought many changes to our reservation. Antelope and blacktailed deer had gone the way of the buffalo. A few earth lodges yet stood, dwellings of stern old warriors who lived in the past; but the Indian police saw that every child was in school learning the white man's way. A good dinner at the noon hour made most of the children rather willing scholars.

The white man's peace had stopped our wars with the Sioux; and the young folks of either tribe visited, and made presents to one another. I had visited the Standing Rock Sioux, and had learned to rather like

them. Indeed, I liked one Sioux girl so well that I married her. We had a comfortable cabin; my wife was a good cook, and my children were in school.

Living so far from the mission, it was not possible for me to attend church services at the mission house; but Mr. Hall came to Independence and preached to us. Until a school house was built, he often held his meetings in my cabin.

I usually interpreted for him. He would speak in English and I would translate into Hidatsa, which the Mandans also understand. Indians are good linguists; not a few young men of my tribe speak as many as four or five languages.

I drew no salary as interpreter; but I felt myself well repaid by what I learned of the Bible. Interpreting Mr. Hall's sermons made them sink into my heart, so that I would think of them as I went about my work.

As time went on, there grew up quite a company of Christians at Independence. One of their active leaders was Frank White Calf; and he and Sitting Crow called a kind of praying council at Two Chiefs' cabin. All the Independence Christians came; and I was invited to meet them.

Some of the Indians prayed; and Frank White Calf asked me, "Goodbird, why do you not join us in this Christian way? Tell us your mind!"

I arose and spoke: "My friends, I learned of this Christian way at the mission school. It is a good way. You ask me my thoughts. I answer, I have tried to live like a Christian and I love to read my Bible, but I have not received baptism; I am now ready to be baptized."

A few days after this, Frank White Calf said to me,

"Mr. Hall wants you to come to the mission house and be baptized."

I went the next Sunday with my family, and was received into the church. My sons Charles and Alfred were baptized at the same time.

In part, I was influenced to become a church member by the thought that it was the white man's way. Our Indian beliefs, I felt sure, were doomed; for white men's customs were becoming stronger with us each year. "I am traveling the new way, now!" I thought, when I was baptized. "I can never go back to Indian ways again."

But for some years, even after I became a church member, I was not a very firm Christian; and I did not keep God's commandments very well, because I did not believe all that the missionaries taught me. I was unwilling to trust any white man's words, until I had proved that they were true. I did not want to take anything on faith.

Mr. Hall made Independence a preaching station, and put an assistant in charge; I interpreted for her. Sometimes Mr. Hall, or his son, preached to us.

The missionary teacher let me know each week what was to be the next Sunday's lesson, and she gave me books to read. Knowing something of her subject, I was better able to interpret for her. In this way, also, I learned more of Christ's teachings; and I learned how to study my Bible.

This study of the Bible influenced me a great deal; and my having to interpret made me fall into the habit of going to church regularly. My interest in church work grew.

In 1903, the government abolished the position of

assistant farmer. In October of the following year, Mr. Hall's son said to me, "We need an assistant missionary at Independence, and my father and I want to appoint you. Come and talk with my father about it."

I went to Elbowoods and saw Mr. Hall. "Edward," he asked, "are you willing to be our assistant missionary?"

"Yes," I answered.

I knew some one must preach to the Independence Indians; and I thought I could do this, because I could speak their language as well as read English. I felt also that I was closer to God than I had been when I was baptized.

So I became Mr. Hall's assistant, and have been in charge of the Independence station ever since. Every Sunday I preach to the Indians in the Hidatsa language. My text is the Sunday-school lesson of the week, for we Indians do not care for sermons, such as white men hear. Our older men cannot read English, and we do not have the Bible in our own tongue; we like best to hear the Sunday-school lesson because it explains the stories of the Bible, which my people cannot read for themselves.

Things do not always go smoothly in an Indian congregation. Frictions and misunderstandings arise, as I have heard they do in white churches; and Indians sometimes seek to become church members from unworthy motives. Our former life makes us Indians clannish; members of the same clan feel bound to help one another, and many Indians seem to look upon the church as a kind of clan. Sometimes a young man will say, "I will be baptized and join your church. Then

all the Christians will work to make me agency policeman!"

Others, again, will say, "I want to join the church because I am sick; perhaps God will make me well!"

Some, with clearer faith, say, "I want to become a Christian because I believe Jesus will save me to be a spirit with Him." They mean that they hope Jesus will take them to live with Him when they die.

My uncle, Wolf Chief, says of the Christian way: "I traveled faithfully the way of the Indian gods, but they never helped me. When I was sick, I prayed to them, but they did not make me well. I prayed to them when my children died; but they did not answer me. I have but two children left, and I am going to trust God to keep these that they do not die like the others. I talk to God every day, as I would talk to my father; and I ask Him for everything I want. I try to do all that He bids me do. I hope that He will take my spirit to travel in that new heaven about which I have learned. I cannot change now. I can never go back to the old gods!"

Wolf Chief has been a strong Christian for more than eight years. He has given much to our mission work; and he is never absent from Sunday services.

Six years ago, we Christians at Independence became dissatisfied with our log meeting house, and began to talk of building a chapel, or church-house, as we call it. A council was called in Wolf Chief's cabin.

It was an evening in December; all the leading Christians of Independence came with their wives—Wolf Chief, Tom Smith, Frank White Calf, Mike Basset, Hollis Montclair, Sam Jones, Louis Baker, and myself. Each woman brought something for a feast, and we ate

together. We had fried bread, tea, pie, tomato soup, and other good things.

When our feasting was over, Wolf Chief made a speech. "We Christian Indians," he said, "should have a chapel. We should raise the money to build a house to God, where we can go and worship!"

Tom Smith and others spoke, and we called for subscriptions. Frank White Calf's wife gave five dollars. Wolf Chief's brother, Charging Enemy, although not a Christian, gave a pony. Others promised, some ten, some fifteen, and some twenty-five dollars.

I was appointed treasurer to make collections, and get more subscriptions. I wrote a letter to Water Chief's dancing society and asked them to give something. The dancing Indians are pagans; but they gave us a subscription.

Mr. Hall gave us fifty dollars; Mr. Shultis, our school-teacher, gave us ten dollars; and other white friends gave us subscriptions; but most of the money was given by the Indians.

When we had collected three hundred and fifty dollars, we began buying lumber.

Wolf Chief wanted to give us the land for our chapel; but the Indian commissioner wrote, "No, you may sell your land, but you must not give it away." So we bought the land for a dollar an acre; but Wolf Chief gave the money back to us, outwitting the commissioner after all!

We bought ten acres. "When white men build a house," said Wolf Chief, "they leave land around it for a yard. We should be ashamed not to have some land around God's house!" Our ten-acre plot makes a fine big church yard; at one end is our Indian cemetery.

Wolf Chief also gave us a colt, and much money, and bought paint and nails.

We Indians think Wolf Chief wealthy. He owns five hundred acres of land, thirty head of cattle, eight horses, and pigs and chickens; he has a potato field and a corn field, and owns a trading store.

More than fifty were present when we dedicated our chapel. A minister from Minneapolis preached the sermon, and I interpreted for him. A young white lady sang, and played the organ, and my cousin played a clarinet. Our school teacher had lent us his phonograph, and it sang "There are ninety and nine," just like a choir in a city church. I asked for subscriptions to clear off our debt, and we raised eighty-three dollars in money, and Wolf Chief gave us another colt. The minister prayed God to bless our chapel, and we went home, all very happy.

Older Indians, who came from Like-a-fish-hook village, find their life on allotments rather lonesome. Cabins are often two or three miles apart and the old men cannot amuse themselves with books, for they cannot read. In old times, Indians often met in big dances; but pagan ceremonies are used in these dances, and Mr. Hall does not like the Christian Indians to go to them.

That our Christian Indians may meet socially now and then, we now observe many white men's holidays; and at such times, we make our chapel the meeting place. In August, we hold a Young Men's Christian Convention, when families come from miles around, to camp in tents around the chapel. At Christmas, we have feasting and giving of presents; and our chapel is so crowded that many have to stand without, and

look through the windows. Of late years, we have also observed Decoration Day at Independence.

Our camp last Decoration Day was ten or more tents, with two or three families in a tent. We made a booth, after old custom, of leafy branches and small trees. In this we gathered at about ten o'clock.

Our school teacher began our exercises with a speech telling us what Decoration Day should mean to us. We sang "America," and other hymns, and had speeches by Indians. A committee had been appointed to choose the speakers.

Rabbit Head spoke, "I do not know anything about your way, but I encourage you! Go on, do more. I have nothing against your going the Christian way!" Rabbit Head is a chief in the Grass dance society, and a pagan.

Wounded Face spoke, "I do not belong to this church, I am a Catholic; but I thus show that I like white men's ways!"

After dinner we made ready to decorate our graves. Every family having a son buried in our graveyard, hired a clan father to clean the grave of weeds and stones; if a daughter, a clan aunt was asked. An Indian calls the members of his mother's clan, his brothers and sisters; members of his father's clan, he calls his clan fathers and aunts.

At two o'clock we formed a procession and marched to the cemetery. Two aged scouts led, High Eagle and Black Chest; High Eagle bore a large American flag. We marched by two's in a long line, the men first, then the women and children. Having marched around the graveyard, we stood and sang some hymns, and I made a speech:

"All you relatives and friends of these dead, I want to make a speech to you!

"It seems sad to our hearts to come here, and yet we are glad, because we come to remember our loved ones at their graves; so both gladness and sorrow are in our hearts.

"These warrior men, that you see here, fought against our enemies. They fought to save us, so that to-day we are not captive, but free. Some of the brave men who fought to save us, died in battle. Also, some of your loved ones have died and are buried in this graveyard. Many of these loved ones did not die fighting against enemies, yet they were brave warriors against evil and temptation. Now they are gone from us. They are in a new world, the ghost land; they are with God. I am sure they are in a safe, happy place.

"Now come forward, all who want to put flowers on the graves."

We had had a cold, dry spring, and the prairie flowers had not come into bloom, but we had sent to Plaza and bought artificial silk flowers. The clan fathers and aunts placed these flowers on the graves, while many of the women wept.

We Hidatsas know that our Indian ways will soon perish; but we feel no anger. The government has given us a good reservation, and we think the new way better for our children.

I think God made all peoples to help one another. We Indians have helped you white people. All over this country are corn fields; we Indians gave you the seeds for your corn, and we gave you squashes and

beans. On the lakes in your parks are canoes; Indians taught you to make those canoes.

We Indians think you are but paying us back, when you give us schools and books, and teach us the new way.

For myself, my family and I own four thousand acres of land; and we have money coming to us from the government. I own cattle and horses. I can read English, and my children are in school.

I have good friends among the white people, Mr. Hall and others, and best of all, I think each year I know God a little better.

I am not afraid.

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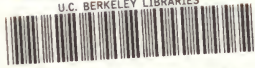
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